

Jean Callison Elementary School

2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

Reason for Investigation

Each year the Grand Jury visits a random selection of schools in the County.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Toured school facilities
- Talked with administrators, teachers, and students
- Observed students in classes, and moving from class to class
- Observed libraries, computer labs, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and classrooms
- Reviewed health and safety procedures

III. Background

1. Jean Callison Elementary is located on the south side of Vacaville. Many parents locate here and commute to the larger metropolitan areas. Quite a few military families, who are assigned to Travis AFB, also reside in this district. Travis AFB is located approximately five miles from the campus.

2. The campus opened in 1990 and currently has 751 students in its K-6th grade programs. Despite the reduction of custodial staff the campus is very clean and well maintained. Long-term maintenance needs are a concern with reduced staff in custodial jobs. The K-3rd grades are limited to 20 students per class. All teachers are certificated except for one.

3. Callison's Academic Performance Index (API) score of 798 is one of the highest in the Vacaville Unified School District. In addition to basic core curriculum the following programs are offered: Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), English Learner (EL), Miller Unruh Reading Specialist, Resource Specialist Program (RSP), Special Day Class, and a Speech and Language Program. A dedicated and experienced staff provides several before and after school clubs for the students. Some of the clubs offered to students include Student Council, Homework Club, Art Club, Choir, Sports Card Club, Math Club, Peace Partners and Friday Night Live Kids. Activities that promote a positive learning environment include weekly Student of the Week assemblies, Caught Being Good program, weekly math contests, writing contests, reading incentive programs, public display of student work and a popular Doughnuts with the Principal program.

4. Callison has an active Parent Teacher Club that sponsors activities throughout the year. These opportunities provide social interaction among the families and enhance the education process. These activities include, but are not limited to, Muffins for Mom, Doughnuts for Dad, Grandparents Day, Spaghetti Feed, Callison Craft Fair, Book Fairs, Clean-Up Day and Parent Art Project. In addition, parents contribute time to volunteer in classrooms on a regular basis. Parent involvement is a key element of the student's success at school.

5. The school Safety Plan was in the process of being updated when the Grand Jury visited the campus. An updated, comprehensive school safety plan was received by the Grand Jury in February 2003. This plan is individualized for Callison to meet the needs of its students, parents, and staff in order to

promote a safe and disciplined environment conducive to learning. The plan integrates its mission of providing a strong academic foundation for every student. It is evident many hours were spent to develop a plan that is easily understood, complies with district policies, and yet meets the specific environment of Callison Elementary. Despite not having an updated plan prior to the Grand Jury visit; the school took action to address safety issues in the past year. They constructed a chain-link fence to close the school off from the adjacent park and all gates are locked during school hours. A crosswalk was painted in front of the school and a crossing guard is on duty before and after school. The raised plant-wall in front of the school is variegated to keep skateboarders off.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

Each Finding is referenced to the background paragraph numbers

Finding #1 – Callison’s 2003 School Safety Plan is comprehensive and integrates its mission to provide a strong academic foundation for every student. (5)

Recommendation #1 – The school should share their ideas and processes for a school safety plan with other schools and districts.

V. Comments

Long-term maintenance needs could become a low priority because of staff reduction in the custodial staff. It is recognized that budget issues are the reasons for reduced staff; however, an action plan that would involve the prioritization of long-term maintenance and utilization of district wide staff could preclude expensive repairs that result when work is not done in a timely manner.

Affected Agencies

- Solano County Office of Education
 - Vacaville Unified School District
 - Jean Callison Elementary School
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